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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/010,773	11/13/2001	Jasjit S. Suri	PKR 2 0702	2745
7590	03/02/2004		EXAMINER	
Thomas E. Kocovsky, Jr. FAY, SHARPE, FAGAN, MINNICH & McKEE, LLP Seventh Floor 1100 Superior Avenue Cleveland, OH 44114-2518			MANTIS MERCADER, ELENI M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3737	3
DATE MAILED: 03/02/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/010,773	SURI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Eleni Mantis Mercader	3737

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 13 November 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Please NOTE: Examiner requests re-submission of the IDS as is missing from the case for consideration of the references cited.

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: the specification refers to five vessels 332, however Figure 13 only shows four vessels 332. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to correct the inconsistency of the number of reference sign(s) 332 in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yim'351 in view of Yim et al.'440.

Yim'351 teaches all the elements of the current invention including an apparatus for producing an angiographic image by utilizing:

an imaging scanner including at least one of MRI scanner or computed tomography that acquires imaging data including vascular contrast (see col. 5, lines 30-39; referring to typical scanners used and see col. 5, lines 54-61; referring to the vascular contrast);

a reconstruction processor that reconstructs an image representation from the imaging data (see col. 4, lines 22-40; referring to a reconstruction processor);

a processor that converts the image representation into an edge-enhanced image representation having enhanced vascular edges (see col. 5, lines 40-61 and see wireframe model of Figure 10e and col. 15, lines 21-32) and divides the edge-enhanced image representation into at least one two-dimensional slice formed of pixels and for each slice identifying vessel centers through an iterative process (see col. 14, lines 48-67 and see col. 15, lines 1-21) and segments, tracks, extracts, enhances, or identifies vascular information contained in the angiographic image using the centers as operative input (see Figures 10g-10h and see col. 15, lines 22-42).

While Yim'351 determines the vessel centers through an iterative process, Yim'351 does not utilize a flood-fill method to determine the centers. Yim et al.'440 recognizes that flood-filled methods or as referred to as watershed methods have been successfully applied in MRA to separate different vessels (see paragraph 0007).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time that the invention was made to have modified Yim'351 and incorporated the teachings of Yim et al.'440 to determine the central path of the vessel of interest by utilizing the flood-filled or watershed method as an alternative functional equivalent of achieving the same end result, namely determining the central path.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Wilson et al.'987 teach a knowledge based computer aided diagnosis.

Yim'351 teaches a vessel delineation in MRA.

Aylward et al.'816 teach systems and methods for tubular object processing.

Markram-Ebeid'405 teaches local determinations of centers.

Zahala et al.'332 teach an automated 3D segmentation method.

Aylward et al.'816 teach systems and methods for tubular object processing.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eleni Mantis Mercader whose telephone number is 703 308-0899. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri., 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dennis Ruhl can be reached on 703 308-2262. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Eleni Mantis Mercader
Eleni Mantis Mercader
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3737

EMM